

REMARKS

Claims 2-4, 7-18, and 21-30 remain pending in the present application.

**Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over McGinty et al.
In view of Blades et al. and further in view of Bisbis et al.**

Claims 2-4, 7-18, and 21-30 stand variously rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious in view of McGinty et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,117,801) in view of Blades et al. and further in view of Bisbis et al. Applicants traverse these bases for rejection and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

Since both outstanding rejections rely ultimately on McGinty et al., Applicants will address the rejections together.

McGinty et al. was filed on March 27, 1997, and issued on September 12, 2000. The present application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application Nos. 60/160,021, filed October 18, 1999, and 60/229,224, filed August 31, 2000. Both provisional filing dates precede the issuance date of McGinty et al. As such, McGinty et al. is available as prior art only under 35 U.S.C. §102(e), and the present rejection is therefore made under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)/103(a).

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is improper pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(c), as McGinty et al. and the invention claimed in the present application were subject to common ownership at the time of the present invention. The assignment of the present invention is recorded at reel 011649, frame 0924, and that of McGinty et al. is recorded at reel 8779, frame 0901.

In view of the foregoing, allowance of the above-referenced application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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